

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

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R 190955Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3044

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

S E C R E T TEHRAN 8017

EXDIS

EO 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, IR, PK, IN, AF

SUBJ: PAK-INDIAN-AFGHAN RELATIONS

REF: TEHRAN 7935

1. AT AUDIENCE ON AFTERNOON OF AUGUST 18, THE SHAH ADVERTED TO THE DEVELOPMENTS DESCRIBED IN REFTEL AND REAFFIRMED HIS CONCERNS ABOUT WHAT INDIA MIGHT DO IF ITS DOMESTIC PROBLEMS WORSENE. HE ADMITTED THAT UNIDENTIFIED BRITISH INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS HAD TOLD HIM RECENTLY THEY DID NOT BELIEVE INDIA WOULD ATTACK PAKISTAN. THE SHAH IS OBVIOUSLY NOT SO SURE AND HAS RECENTLY REPEATED TO MRS. GANDHI HIS FAMILIAR POSITION THAT HE IS PREPARED TO MEDIATE BETWEEN INDIA AND PAKISTAN BUT THAT HE WILL NOT STAND IDLY BY AND WITNESS THE FURTHER BREAKUP OF PAKISTAN. HE MUSES OVER WHAT HE REFERS TO AS THE EXTRAORDINARY IMBALANCE BETWEEN THE INDIAN AIR FORCE AND THAT OF PAKISTAN WITH ONLY ONE SQUADRON OF HIGH-PERFORMANCE MIRAGES. HE POINTS OUT WITH SOME JUSTICE THAT PAKISTAN WOULD NOT HAVE A CHANCE IF IT WERE ATTACKED SIMULTANEOUSLY BY BOTH INDIA AND AFGHANISTAN. INCIDENTALLY, HIS PREDILECTION TO EXAGGERATE THE STRENGTH OF THE AFGHAN ARMED FORCES I HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO COOL, BASED ON MY CONVERSATIONS AND

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OVSERVATIONS DURINGA RECENT TRIP TO AFGHANISTAN.

2. COMMENT: IN VOICING HIS CONCERNS ABOUT THESE MATTERS, THE SHAH IS PURSUING HIS USUAL POLICY OF ATTEMPTING TO BE LONG-HEADED WHERE FOREIGN AFFAIRS ARE INVOLVED. HIS THEORY, ALTHOUGH HE NEVER ARTICULATES IT PRECISELY, IS THAT IF ONE CAN IDENTIFY POSSIBLE CRISES WELL ENOUGH IN ADVANCE AND MAKE ENOUGH NOISE ABOUT THEM, THEY MAY NEVER EVENTUATE AND THUS OBVIATE THE NECESSITY FOR PAINFUL CHOICES AND EQUALLY PAINFUL ACTIONS.
HELMS

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PERSONAL OPINION, FOREIGN RELATIONS, INVASIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 AUG 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ellisoob
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975TEHRAN08017
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750286-0862
From: TEHRAN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750838/aaaabhaq.tel
Line Count: 71
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 75 TEHRAN 7935
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ellisoob
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <29 JUL 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <26 NOV 2003 by ellisoob>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PAK-INDIAN-AFGHAN RELATIONS
TAGS: PFOR, IR, PK, IN, AF, (PAHLAVI, MOHAMMAD REZA)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006